

Forestry Association

O F S O U T H C A R O L I N A

Representing South Carolina's \$21 Billion Forest Industry

September 4, 2020

Chief Clerk Jocelyn Boyd
South Carolina Public Service Commission
101 Executive Center Drive, Suite 100
Columbia, SC 29210

Dear Chief Clerk Boyd,

Re: Inquiry Regarding Dominion Energy South Carolina, Incorporated's Tree Trimming Practices and the Pros and Cons of Moving Above-Ground Electric Lines and Placing Them Underground

The forest industry has an economic impact of \$21 Billion and provides more than 98,000 jobs annually in South Carolina. In addition, timber is the state's number one agribusiness crop with pole timber being the most valuable.

The Forestry Association of South Carolina strongly opposes underground power lines because of the negative impact it would have on the value of pole timber, the loss of jobs at pole treating facilities, and increased utility costs.

In addition to the high costs that would be placed on utility customers, there would be devastating consequences on landowners, pole treatment facilities, and the environment in South Carolina.

- A legal requirement that power lines be buried disadvantages timber growers by not utilizing the pole-grade timber which is the highest-valued product from the forests of South Carolina.
- Even a scheduled implementation could ultimately result in the closing of pole buying and treating facilities in South Carolina costing jobs and destroying markets for South Carolina's timber growers.
- Overhead power lines have long contributed to the environment in a positive way. Overhead lines allow for vegetative activity underneath the lines that enhance environmental conditions for wildlife including food plots, food strips, low level cover for small rodents and mammals. Power line right of ways serve to enhance the growth of perennial legumes and berries that serve as food sources for deer, turkey, bear, upland birds, and a host of other wildlife species. Also, wires provide perches for all birds, from song birds to birds of prey, when resting, breeding, and hunting.

- Supporting private ownership of forest lands is the most practical way to achieve climate and ecological values that we cherish. But to keep these private lands as forests, landowners need viable markets including the pole timber market. The pole timber market is important to these private landowners since it provides the incentive to plant and manage healthy and productive forests.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments in support of the forest industry and forest conservation in South Carolina.

Sincerely,



Cam Crawford
President & CEO